



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

In reply, please address to:
Main Interior, Room 6456

James Mothershead, Esq.
Assistant Regional Solicitor, Alaska Region
4230 University Drive, Suite 300
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-4626

March 31, 2006

By Regular Mail and Fax to:
907-271-4143

Re: Omar Stratman v. Leisnoi, Inc.
Certification of the Native Village of Woody Island

Dear Mr. Mothershead:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a report as to the current status of the Secretary's review of the certification of the Native Village of Woody Island, Leisnoi, Inc.

Previously, I advised you that our office had finalized and sent forward to David Bernhardt, the Deputy Solicitor, a briefing package and a draft recommended decision for the Secretary's consideration. Subsequent to our sending the briefing package and draft recommended decision to Deputy Solicitor Bernhardt, the Senate held hearings on his confirmation as Solicitor and the Secretary appointed Carl Artman from Wisconsin as the new Associate Solicitor – Indian Affairs. We have briefed Mr. Artman on the package and we have met with the Deputy Solicitor to discuss the package and the draft recommended decision.

On Friday, March 10, 2006, Secretary Norton announced her resignation to take effect at the end of the month. The Secretary has not decided this matter and will not decide it by the time her resignation becomes effective later today. Following Secretary Norton's announcement, President Bush did, however, announce on March 16 his nomination of Governor Dirk Kempthorne of Idaho to replace her. We do not currently know when the Senate will schedule confirmation hearings on Governor Kempthorne's nomination. Until Secretary Norton's replacement is confirmed, Deputy Secretary P. Lynn Scarlett will serve as the Acting Secretary.

In light of the fact that the President has already nominated Secretary Norton's replacement, we would anticipate that Deputy Secretary Scarlett will defer taking any immediate action on the

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draft recommended decision. If it appears that Senate action on the President's nominee will be delayed, we will raise with the Deputy Secretary, the need for action on this matter.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Scott Keep

Assistant Solicitor

Branch of Tribal Government and Alaska
Division of Indian Affairs

cc: By Regular Mail and Fax to:

Michael Schneider, Esq.
880 N Street
Suite 202
Anchorage, AK 99505
Counsel for Omar Stratman

Fax 907-274-8201

John R. Fitzgerald, Esq.
McAlpine, Peuler & Cozad
701 South Peters Street
Suite 300
New Orleans, LA 70130
Co-counsel for Native Village of Woody Island/ Leisnoi, Inc.

Fax 504-528-9442

William P. Horn, Esq.
Roy S. Jones, Esq.
Birch, Horton, Bittner & Cherot
1155 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Suite 1200
Washington, D.C. 20036
Co-counsel for Native Village of Woody Island/ Leisnoi, Inc.

Fax 202-659-1027

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R. Collin Middleton, Esq.

Middleton & Timme, P.C.

421 West First Avenue

Suite 250

Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Counsel for Koniag, Inc.

Fax 907-276-8238

Bruce Landon, Esq.

U. S. Department of Justice

Environment & Natural Resources Division

801 B Street, Suite 504

Anchorage, AK 99501-3657

Fax 907-271-5827

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